

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 DHA-02 ARA-06 /087 W

-----081839Z 119950 /12

R 061145Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5662

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MAPUTO 0364

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MZ, RH

SUBJECT: REV. SITHOLE CALLS AT EMBASSY

1. SUMMARY: REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AND DCM AT EMBASSY APRIL 5. SITHOLE WAS ALARMED BY CASTRO AND PODGORNÝ VISITS, SAW VISIT OF PODGORNÝ AS AN ATTEMPT BY A "SUPER POWER" TO IDENTIFY ITSELF WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND TO "CONVERT OUR ARMED STRUGGLE INTO A RUSSIAN POSSESSION." DURING DISCUSSION, SITHOLE ALSO REVIEWED RESULTS OF HIS RECENT TRAVELS TO WEST AFRICA, CLAIMED HE HAD SUPPORT OF 80 PERCENT OF ZIMBABWEAN GUERRILLA FIGHTERS, NOTED HE WAS NOT OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF HOLDING A REFERENDUM IN RHODESIA, AND SAID HE WAS WEIGHING POSSIBILITY OF RETURNING TO RHODESIA. HE HAS ASKED TO SEE MACHEL, BUT WAS NOT CONFIDENT APPOINTMENT WOULD BE GRANTED.
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END SUMMARY

2. PODGORN-CASTRO VISIT: SITHOLE SAID THAT HE WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE RECENT VISITS OF PODGORNÝ AND CASTRO TO SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE SAID HE VIEWED THEM "AS A DELIBERATE EFFORT BY A SUPER POWER TO IDENTIFY ITSELF WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT" AND TO "CONVERT OUR ARMED

STRUGGLE INTO A RUSSIAN POSSESSION." WE ARE INTERESTED IN BEING OURSELVES AND DO NOT ASPIRE TO BE LIKE THE RUSSIANS, CHINESE, BRITISH OR AMERICANS. THE RUSSIANS "ARE NOT PLAYING AROUND." THEY WOULD LIKE TO GET HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE ZIMBABWEAN CONFLICT. THEY WANT TO HAVE A STRONG HOLD IN ZIMBABWE. SITHOLE SAID HE KNEW PERSONALLY THAT THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBAWE DID NOT LIKE THE RUSSIANS AND THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO TRADE ONE COLONIALISM FOR ANOTHER. SITHOLE ASKED THAT HIS VIEWS ON THE PODGORNÝ-CASTRO VISITS BE COMMUNICATED TO WASHINGTON.

WHEN ASKED WHY PATRIOTIC FRONT LEADER ROBERT MUGABE HAD NOT SEEN PRESIDENT PODGORNÝ DURING HIS VISIT TO MOZAMBIQUE, SITHOLE REPLIED THAT NKOMO WAS THE SOVIET'S MAN AND THAT THEY WERE PUSHING HIM FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT. HE SAID THE SOVIETS WANT TO GIVE IMPRESSION THAT NKOMO NOT MUGABE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

3. FREEDOM FIGHTERS: ALTHOUGH SITHOLE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE GPRM DOES NOT ALLOW HIM TO VISIT THE GUERRILLA CAMPS, HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD THE SUPPORT OF 80 PERCENT OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS.

HE CONTENDED THAT THE GUERRILLAS ARE UNITED BEHIND HIS NAME AND LEADERSHIP AND THAT THEY ARE COMPLETELY LOYAL TO HIM. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE ASSERTED THAT MUGABE HAS ABSOLUTELY NO SUPPORT AMONG THE GUERRILLAS AND THAT HE WOULD BE SHOT IF HE ATTEMPTED TO VISIT ANY OF THE CAMPS. THE GUERRILLAS RECOGNIZE THAT MUGABE IS "VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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SELFISH" AND HAS CAUSED MANY DEATHS AMONG THEM. SITHOLE SAID THAT THERE ARE OPEN CLASHES IN THE GUERRILLAS CAMPS AND THAT THE GUERRILLAS DO NOT FIGHT AS ZIPA BUT RATHER AS MEMBERS OF ZANU OR ZAPU. SITHOLE DESCRIBED ZIPA AS A CREATION OF THE MOZAMBIQUE NEWSPAPERS AND RADIO AND CLAIMED THAT ZIPA AND PATRIOTIC FRONT "ARE NOT POLITICAL REALITIES IN ZIMBABWE."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MAPUTO 0364

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

4. REFERENDUM IN RHODESIA: WHEN ASKED HIS VIEWS ABOUT MUZOREWA'S PROPOSAL FOR A REFERENDUM IN RHODESIA, SITHOLE SAID HE WAS NOT OPPOSED TO A REFERENDUM AS LONG AS IT "WAS AN HONEST EXERCISE." SITHOLE SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO FEAR IN AN ELECTION SINCE HE ENJOYED THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF SUPPORT AMONG THE ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MUZOREWA AND NKOMO ALSO ENJOY LESSER SUPPORT. HE SAID HE IS SEEKING TO ARRANGE A "CONCULTATION CONFERENCE" OF ZANU LEADERS SOMEWHERE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE SAID HE HAD TRIED DAR, BUT HAD BEEN REFUSED. HE ALSO SAID HE WEIGHING POSSIBILITY OF RETURNING TO RHODESIA. HE SAID HE MIGHT BE ARRESTED, BUT REACTION OF ZIMBAWEAN PEOPLE TO HIS RETURN WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE LARGE SUPPORT HE HAS IN THE COUNTRY.

5. SITHOLE LOBBIES AGAINST DECISION TO RECOGNIZE PATRIOTIC FRONT: SITHOLE SAID HE WAS COMPLETELY OPPOSED
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TO THE DECISION BY THE FRONT LINE STATES TO ACCORD PATRIOTIC FRONT SPECIAL RECOGNITION. ALTHOUGH HE WAS IN LUSAKA AT THE TIME THE DECISION WAS MADE, HE WAS NOT CONSULTED ABOUT IT AND TOOK THE GREATEST EXCEPTION TO IT AFTER IT WAS ANNOUNCED. HE SAID ZANU WILL NEVER ACCEPT THAT DECISION: IT WAS UNDEMOCRATIC, WOULD FURTHER DIVIDE THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS AND EVENTUALLY CREATE ANOTHER ANGOLA INSIDE ZIMBABWE. HE SAID THAT ZIMBABWE WAS NOT A COLONY OF THE FRONT LINE STATES AND THAT THE PRESIDENTS OF THE FRONT LINE STATES HAD NO RIGHT TO "PREDETERMINE THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF AN INDEPENDENT

ZIMBABWE." FOLLOWING THE LUSAKA MEETING HE SAID HE TRAVELED TO TEN STATES. MOST OF THE LEADERS OF THOSE STATES SUPPORTED HIM.

6. U.S. POLICY: SITHOLE SAID HE AGREED WITH THE CURRENT U.S. POLICY TOWARD ZIMBABWE, I.E., THAT U.S. SHOULD NOT INTERFERE IN INTERNAL ZIMBABWEAN NATIONALIST POLITICS AND LEAVE THE DECISION OF LEADERSHIP OF INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE TO THE ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE. SITHOLE WAS PLEASED THAT THE BYRD AMENDMENT HAD BEEN REPEALED AND THOUGHT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS OFF TO A GOOD START.

7. MOZAMBIQUE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SITHOLE: WHEN ASKED IF HE PLANNED TO SEE MACHEL, SITHOLE SAID HE HAD REQUESTED APPOINTMENT, BUT WAS STILL WAITING FOR ANSWER. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MOZAMBIQUE WAS IN FOREFRONT OF STATES SEEKING TO GAIN EXCLUSIVE RECOGNITION FOR PATRIOTIC FRONT, NOTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO HAD SOUGHT UNSUCCESSFULLY TO DENY HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AT OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN LOME. HE SAID THAT THE MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT PERMITS HIM TO ENTER MOZAMBIQUE BECAUSE TO DENY HIM PERMISSION WOULD PROVOKDE ADVERSE REACTION THROUGHOUT BLACK AFRICA.

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8. COMMENT: SITHOLE'S ACCOUNT OF THE SYMPATHETIC HEARING HE HAS BEEN RECEIVING FROM AFRICAN LEADERS AND THE SUPPORT HE HAS INSIDE RHODESIA WAS SIMILAR TO WHAT HE HAS BEEN RECITING AT U.S. EMBASSIES ELSEWHERE.

SITHOLE WAS VERY ILL INFORMED ON CASTRO AND PODGORNÝ VISITS. HE HAD NOT READ TEXT OF EITHER THE MOZAMBIQUE-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE NOR THE FRIENDSHIP TREATY, NOR DID HE KNOW UNTIL WE TOLD HIM THAT PODGORNÝ HAD NOT SEEN MUGABE WHILE IN MOZAMBIQUE.

BELIEVE THE CONCERN HE VOICED ABOUT PODGORNÝ VISIT MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED AS MUCH TO SCORE POINTS WITH USG, AS IT REFLECTS ANY STRONG CONVICTIONS ABOUT THE THREAT HE PERCEIVES THE SOVIETS TO BE POSING.

MOZAMBIQUE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT ABOUT TO BE HELPFUL TO HIM. SITHOLE WAS UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN WE ASKED HIM IF HE WAS TO SEE MACHEL OR CHISSANO, AND ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE WAS WAITING WORD TO IF AND WHEN HE MIGHT SEE THEM. HE CERTAINLY WAS NOT CONFIDENT OF RECEIVING APPOINTMENT. WE DOUBT HE WILL SEE EITHER MACHEL OR CHISSANO.

SITHOLE LEAVES ON APRIL 7 FOR LUSAKA.
DE PREE

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Message Attributes

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